CLAIMS

1. An information processing apparatus for supporting operations on program contents distributed at scheduled times, characterized in that it has:

a program information managing section which manages information on program contents;

a starting program setting section which sets a program at which the operations are started;

a starting-program-related information generating section which retrieves information on programs in all program states and extracts programs related to the starting program to generate a starting-program-related information page; and

a detailed operation screen presenting section which presents a detailed operation screen in response to the selection of a related program on said base-program-related information page, the detailed operation screen including a method of operation that can be used for said related program depending on the program state thereof.

2. An information processing apparatus according to Claim 1, characterized in that said starting program setting section sets program contents which is being reproduced or watched and listened to by a user or program

contents selected from a predetermined program table as the starting program.

3. An information processing apparatus according to Claim 1, characterized in that said starting-program-related information generating section generates a starting-program-related information page by extracting related programs from the ID of said set starting program.

4. An information processing apparatus according to Claim 1, characterized in that said starting-program-related information generating section generates a starting-program-related information page by extracting related programs from at least the date of broadcast, the time of broadcast, the name of the broadcast station, and the like at the time when said starting program is set.

5. An information processing apparatus according to Claim 1, characterized in that:

said program information managing section manages program information including a plurality of items to which degrees of relationship to programs are assigned; and

said starting-program-related information generating section retrieves programs related to the starting program with respect to each item based on the

degrees of relationship with the starting program and generates a starting-program-related information page by arranging results of the retrieval.

6. An information processing apparatus according to Claim 5, characterized in that said starting-program-related information generating section generates a starting-program-related information page from results of retrieval by arranging the related programs in the descending order of the items in the degree of relationship with the starting program.

7. An information processing apparatus according to Claim 1, characterized in that:

it further has a reception section which receives program contents and a recording section which performs recording and preset recording of the received program contents; and

said program states include at least one of states of program contents, i.e., " already recorded", "not recorded", "preset for recording", "not preset for recording", and "not received" states.

8. An information processing apparatus according to Claim 7, characterized in that said starting-program-related information generating section displays the program state associated with each piece of related information on the

starting-program-related information page.

9. An information processing apparatus according to Claim 7, characterized in that said starting-program-related information generating section displays an icon indicating the program state associated with each piece of related information on the starting-program-related information page.

10. An information processing apparatus according to Claim 1, characterized in that it further has a section which maintains a display history of said starting-program-related page.

11. An information processing apparatus according to Claim 7, characterized in that said detailed operation screen presenting section presents reproduction and/or erasure of record as a method of operation when the program state of a selected related program is "already recorded".

12. An information processing apparatus according to Claim 7, characterized in that said detailed operation screen presenting section presents cancellation of recording and/or confirmation of presetting as a method of operation when the program state of a selected related program is "preset for recording".

13. An information processing apparatus according to Claim 7, characterized in that said detailed operation screen presenting section presents presetting for

recording as a method of operation when the program state of a selected related program is "not preset for recording".

14. An information processing apparatus according to Claim 13, characterized in that said detailed operation screen presenting section presents a plurality of methods for presetting for recording.

15. An information processing method for supporting operations on program contents distributed at scheduled times where information on each program content is managed using a database, characterized in that it includes:

a starting program setting step for setting a program at which the operations are started;

a starting-program-related information generating step for searching the database for information on programs in all program states to extract programs related to the starting program and generates a starting-program-related information page constituted by said extracted related programs; and

a detailed operation screen presenting step for presenting a detailed operation screen in response to the selection of a related program on said starting-program-related information page, the screen including a method of operation that can be used for said related program depending on the program state thereof.

16. An information processing method according to Claim 15, characterized in that said starting program setting step sets program contents which is being reproduced or watched and listened to by a user or program contents selected from a predetermined program table as the starting program.

17. An information processing method according to Claim 15, characterized in that said starting-program-related information generating step generates a starting-program-related information page by extracting related programs from the ID of said set starting program.

18. An information processing method according to Claim 15, characterized in that said starting-program-related information generating step generates a starting-program-related information page by extracting related programs from at least the date of broadcast, the time of broadcast, the name of the broadcast station, and the like at the time when said starting program is set.

19. An information processing method according to Claim 15, characterized in that:

said program information management database manages program information including a plurality of items to which degrees of relationship with programs are

assigned; and

said starting-program-related information generating step retrieves programs related to the starting program with respect to each item based on the degrees of relationship with the starting program and generates a starting-program-related information page by arranging results of the retrieval.

20. An information processing method according to Claim 19, characterized in that said starting-program-related information generating step generates a starting-program-related information page from results of retrieval by arranging the related programs in the descending order of the items in the degree of relationship with the starting program.

21. An information processing method according to Claim 15, characterized in that said program state includes at least one of a state in which program contents have already been recorded, a state in which the recording has not been made yet, a state in which presetting for recording has already been made, a state in which presetting for recording has not been made yet, and a state in which program contents have not been received yet.

22. An information processing method according to Claim 21, characterized in that said

starting-program-related information generating step displays the program state associated with each piece of related information on the starting-program-related information page.

23. An information processing method according to Claim 21, characterized in that said starting-program-related information generating step displays an icon indicating the program state associated with each piece of related information on the starting-program-related information page.

24. An information processing method according to Claim 15, characterized in that it further has the step of maintaining a display history of said starting-program-related page.

25. An information processing method according to Claim 21, characterized in that said detailed operation screen presenting step presents reproduction and/or erasure of record as a method of operation when the program state of a selected related program is "already recorded".

26. An information processing method according to Claim 21, characterized in that said detailed operation screen presenting step presents cancellation of recording and/or confirmation of presetting as a method of operation when the program state of a selected related program is "presetting for recording has already been made".

27. An information processing method according to Claim 21, characterized in that said detailed operation screen presenting step presents presetting for recording as a method of operation when the program state of a selected related program is "presetting for recording has not been made yet".

28. An information processing method according to Claim 27, characterized in that said detailed operation screen presenting step presents a plurality of methods for presetting for recording.

29. A computer program described in a computer-readable form to execute a process for supporting operations on program contents distributed at scheduled times where information on each program content is managed using a database, characterized in that it includes:

a starting program setting step for setting a program at which the operations are started;

a starting-program-related information generating step for searching the database for information on programs in all program states to extract programs related to the starting program and generating a starting-program-related information page constituted by said extracted related programs; and

a detailed operation screen presenting step for

presenting a detailed operation screen in response to the selection of a related program on said starting-program-related information page, the screen including a method of operation that can be used for said related program depending on the program state thereof.